

MEETING SUMMARY
FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC) MEETING
Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan
2101 Wood Street, Lansing
August 13, 2008
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Lynne M. Boyd, Chair, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Mr. Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Desmond Jones, Michigan Tree Farm System
Dr. Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Tech
Mr. Thomas Barnes, Michigan Association of Timbermen
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Mr. William Manson, Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association
Ms. Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan (MUCC)
Mr. Stephen Shine, Department of Agriculture
Mr. George Berghorn, Michigan Forest Products Council
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Joel Blohm, Great Northern Lumber of Michigan
Mr. Frank Ruswick, Department of Environmental Quality
Dr. Donna LaCourt, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (representing Ms. Susan Holben)

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Jerry Bird, USDA Forest Service, Huron-Manistee
Mr. Thomas Ward, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), NRCS

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Thomas Dunn, American Motorcycle Association, District 14
Ms. Rachel Kuntzsch, Heart of the Lakes
Mr. Frank Wheatlake, Natural Resources Commission

FMAC ADVISORS ABSENT

None

PUBLIC ATTENDEES/GUESTS

Mr. & Mrs. Bob McReavy, Roscommon
Mr. William Taft, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Barry Paulson, USDA Forest Service, Huron-Manistee

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Cara Boucher
Mr. Larry Pedersen
Ms. Kim Korbecki

WELCOME

Chair Boyd called the Forest Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:10 p.m., and welcomed everyone present. **Mr. Jerry Bird** introduced the Forest Supervisor, Mr. Barry

Paulson from the United States Forest Service in Montana. Mr. Paulson will be the USFS FMAC Advisor. **Chair Boyd** announced that Dr. Donna LaCourt would be assuming a permanent position on the FMAC, representing Michigan Economic Development Corporation; Ms. Susan Holben will be resigning.

Chair Boyd announced that legislative updates will not appear on the meeting agendas, but will be included in the meeting packets. Questions regarding these documents will be answered as needed.

Chair Boyd asked the FMAC if they would like to have a brief budget overview at each meeting; the majority voted yes. Decision was made that discs providing the packet materials would be sent to those who request it.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Boyd asked for comments on the agenda; there were none.

MOTION: **Mr. Jones** moved to adopt the agenda as presented; seconded by **Dr. Keathley**.
Motion to adopt the Agenda passed unanimously

Ms. Spray requested to speak briefly on deer management. She commented it is a hot topic that MUCC hears about often. MUCC asked the DNR wildlife division to take a strategic management process for deer. The DNR stepped back and said they have to do bear management right now, so the MUCC volunteered to do deer management. They were presenting a 2-year public comment plan to the Natural Resources Commission meeting on August 14, 2008. A Deer Citizens Statewide Management Team will be created to include forestry representatives. If interested in being on this Committee, please contact Ms. Spray. **Ms. Spray** provided the FMAC with an agenda to a public research symposium being held September 29, 2008 in Mt. Pleasant.

ADOPTION OF MEETING SUMMARY/April 23, 2008

Chair Boyd asked for comments regarding the April 23, 2008 FMAC meeting summary; there were none.

MOTION: **Dr. Gale** moved to adopt the April 23, 2008 FMAC Meeting Summary as presented; seconded by **Dr. Keathley**.
Motion to adopt the April 23, 2008 FMAC meeting summary passed unanimously

FMAC VIABILITY

Chair Boyd commented the attendance at this meeting was a good start to discuss the viability of the FMAC. She stated she thinks the committee has tremendous potential, but committee members need to be in attendance and be willing to put the work in, not only preparation but to the finish. She reported she had created a small workgroup to work with this problem, and had sent a series of questions to members based on the recommendations of the workgroup. She stated she had done this basically to get each member thinking about what their role in the Committee is and if they have a desire to still be a member of the Committee. **Chair Boyd** reminded the Committee that they had went through several months of meetings without a quorum present.

Dr. Gale commented her feeling is the FMAC is an advisory committee created to give advice to the DNR. She wasn't sure a quorum should be needed; ideas and help come in many forms. The Committee should be trying to bring as many ideas as possible to help the DNR make decisions and to see different perspectives.

Mr. Roberson stated he agrees with "Roberts Rules", and a quorum. He sees a quorum as a tool to keep members attending. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented we are an advisory committee; if over half of the stakeholders are not attending, the FMAC is not having the opportunity to listen to everyone's advice.

Mr. Berghorn commented that everyone is correct in saying that not having a large group here is a problem, but thought looking deeper at why there has been lighter attendance might be important. **Chair Boyd** responded that perhaps we aren't hitting the target that everyone wants to deal with, and that should be looked at more closely.

Dr. Keathley stated he feels if we are advising the DNR, FMAC should be setting the agenda according to DNR needs. **Chair Boyd** responded if we narrowed it down to just DNR issues, we may miss other important issues such as issues the DNR is remiss in dealing with.

Mr. Suchovsky commented he feels strongly about the need for improvement, but the FMAC needs to be more actively engaged in developing and creating a product. At the meetings we often come and look at a DRAFT product; we need to roll up our sleeves and be involved at the beginning of a product. The forest certification audits should point out problem areas the FMAC can assist with.

Mr. Barnes commented if FMAC is involved early in the process, the Committee gets their input in right away; as of now the Committee normally doesn't get any input from the beginning. Being able to have input from the beginning of a process might help eliminate the complacency of the Committee. He feels if stakeholders are not interested in attending the meetings, they should just be dropped from the Committee. If the FMAC continues to carry a large member base and requires a quorum, it will struggle at every meeting.

Dr. Gale commented that the stakeholder shouldn't be dropped, just the individual representing the stakeholder. **Ms. Spray** agreed, and stated they would still be able to attend as a member of the public and therefore would not be subject to quorum rules.

Mr. Botti questioned how the DNR uses the advice given from the Committee; **Chair Boyd** responded if a vote is taken and passes, it becomes a recommendation to the Statewide Council or other appropriate body within the DNR.

Mr. Roberson commented that other committees he has attended do not make decisions without full consensus and he will be pushing for this for the FMAC. **Chair Boyd** stated to do this they will need to change the bylaws, which currently requires the majority (50%) plus one.

Mr. Ruswick stated in set of questions sent to the Committee, the question was raised as to the formality of the Committee, and the nature of advice they give. He commented that if the FMAC doesn't come up with a position because they don't have 100% consensus, they should think

about how advice is to be provided. **Chair Boyd** responded the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) expects the Committee to bring positions to them; a more informal FMAC will not necessarily be beneficial to the DNR.

Chair Boyd commented there is some merit in everyone's comments. The goal is to try to refocus the Committee and get them moving again. She reported the minutes and agenda items will be sent to the Committee two weeks in advance to help the members prepare for the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. McReavy commented he attended the last NRC meeting in Munising which proved to be very positive for Roscommon on the deer issue. He also discussed the clearcutting issue in the Roscommon area. He hoped the Committee would make recommendations for a different type of forest management. **Mr. Roberson** encouraged the McReavys to get involved in the DNR compartment reviews, as well as the northern ecoregional planning meetings. They would be more able to answer questions about his concerns.

Mr. Barnes questioned if the Wildlife division reviews harvesting plans; **Chair Boyd** responded they do. The process isn't determined until a consensus is reached, so at some point there is total agreement. **Mr. Barnes** stated he had done a lot of research on oak. Oak is the most difficult to regenerate, due to a lot of factors. In the Roscommon region there is not high quality oak or soil for high quality oak. Often clearcutting is the best method to use if understock is already coming up. If there is the ability to time harvest (after acorn drop), you can get in the soil and help them germinate before the frost comes. There is no cut prescription the DNR can give that will give the same number of trees left behind. While the documentaries are good, it cannot be replicated all over the country. Oak is a shade intolerant species; if there is a group selection, 2 or 3 acre clearcuts allows the sun to get in. **Mr. Suchovsky** added that something to keep in mind is since state land is certified FSC, within 3 years the DNR has to have natural regeneration in place; if natural regeneration isn't successful in five years, the DNR has to replant. This is an insurance policy that if it doesn't happen naturally, the DNR must do it. **Mr. Botti** stated that Mr. Barnes is correct; oak doesn't live very long in the Grayling sands. He hired a student from University of Michigan and had him do a study of sprouting stumps; they found smaller stumps sprout more vigorously than larger stumps, regardless of age.

Chair Boyd thanked Mr. McReavy for his comments. **Mrs. McReavy** stated the FMAC is the most important Committee to them.

SOIL AND WATER QUALITY MANUAL

Chair Boyd introduced Mr. Larry Pedersen and Ms. Cara Boucher.

The DNR is looking for technical review and comments on the Soil and Water Quality Manual (Manual). The DNR took the 2004 edition and updated it. The FMAC was provided with a copy of the updated edition for review. The Manual was presented to the FMAC previously and has been posted on the DNR website for comment. It is now being re-presented to the FMAC for additional comment. The goal is to get it finalized by the end of September. **Chair Boyd** commented it is not her intention to review page by page, but if the Committee wishes to share it with their constituent groups, to do so.

Mr. Pedersen reported they had received some excellent comments back clarifying issues. In the previous draft they didn't address vernal ponds; a section on this was included but comments have not been received as of yet. They expect a range of opinions on this subject. **Mr. Pedersen** also referred the Committee to riparian management zone; previously it has been at 100 feet and his feeling is it should be kept at 100 feet. It has been compared with other states.

Mr. James Caron and **Mr. Cary Gustafson**, Department of Environmental Quality, joined the meeting via conference call.

Mr. Pedersen commented on page 4 of the introduction the Manual states Michigan is bordered by three Great Lakes; this has been corrected. There have also been tweaks to language and corrected inaccuracies. The DNR hopes over three to four weeks to work with people and have a product ready by September. **Chair Boyd** asked the Committee for questions.

Mr. Taft commented Crystal Falls has been very closely involved with the Best Management Practices (BMP) manual. They have been educating the industry since the 90s; this work was funded by Michigan State University. **Mr. Gustafson** and **Mr. Caron** have a lot of knowledge in the Upper Peninsula; **Mr. Botti**, a Biologist for the DEQ for twenty years is usually involved with cases in the Upper Peninsula.

Mr. Roberson commented they had been given a very short timeframe for review. He noticed the Manual is almost entirely forest operations and didn't appear to have anything regarding mining operations. **Ms. Boucher** responded mining operation was talked about early on in the Manual update, and a decision was made to go through what was already in the Manual rather than adding additional information. **Mr. Suchovsky** questioned how **Mr. Roberson's** comment relates to soil erosion and other problems; **Chair Boyd** responded mining is not exempt from any of the regulations. A permit must be obtained and all permit requirements must be met.

Discussion ensued regarding vernal ponds. **Mr. Taft** reported in the early 90s, Whitewater Associates was contracted to look at vernal ponds. They wrote about the role of vernal ponds in the ecosystem. Vernal ponds are very important to certain birds in spring, feeding on aquatics, etc. Salamanders need the ponds. The ponds need shade and cover, depending on when you are harvesting. If you don't realize it's a vernal depression you won't treat it the same in fall as in spring.

Mr. Suchovsky commented vernal ponds are an extremely high source of protein; the role of the manager is to identify these when arranging sales. It's important in the planning process. He suggested it be included in the forest management plan; field staff, when recognizing a vernal pond needs to contact their wildlife counterparts.

Dr. Gale mentioned the lack of a section regarding wetlands. **Mr. Pedersen** responded a discussion had been held on whether to expand on wetlands but a decision was made to leave the Manual as is. He stated there are so many other sections dealing with wetlands the DNR didn't feel it warranted its own section. **Mr. Taft** added that they are putting a Manual together that people will put in their glove box to refer to; you cannot put everything in this manual and pointed out most of the requirements are already in the Manual.

Dr. LaCourt commented on vernal ponds and wetlands; some quality specifics are not addressed in the Manual. An entire area may be a wetland so a buffer is not necessarily an issue. On vernal ponds, it should be considered that this Manual, for those certified, will become a valuable audit tool. She stated how to define what a vernal pond is, needs to be made as clear as possible.

Mr. Berghorn stated that from a Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) objective, the language was changed which is appreciated. He feels the Manual is a great document to cover a broad range of issues; he would be happy to train people on BMPs. He wondered if there would be a pocket size version. **Mr. Taft** responded they had spent over \$20,000 of funds to print a small version previously, and the funds are not available now. **Chair Boyd** stated the intent is to get the Manual published.

Mr. Berghorn brought up the spill spot issue. He questions if the DNR would accept one generic spill plan, and suggested a cover sheet with all the specifics included. He questioned if this would fill certification requirements. **Mr. Suchovsky** suggested that a plan needs to be kept on-site, possibly in the spill kit. **Mr. Ruswick** suggested a generic plan would form the initial basis then continue to take on an individual basis. **Ms. Boucher** commented this needs to be rewritten.

Mr. Suchovsky broached the subject of rutting. **Ms. Boucher** responded if you read the information, the majority of causes will be from off-road vehicles. **Mr. Pedersen** stated he is looking forward to recommendations over the next few weeks as rutting is a big issue.

Mr. Roberson questioned a change in riparian management zones; **Mr. Pedersen** responded it was revisited and will not be changed. **Mr. Barnes** stated he would like to have a comprehensive document, but the Manual is also applicable. He commented the DNR has the same guidelines as the 1994 guidelines, and questioned if we have seen areas where DNR management is not sufficient for problems with soil texture. He pointed out that on page 16 there are differences in responses to different soil types or sections. **Mr. Taft** responded soils are more susceptible to erosion; the Manual is sufficient as is. Discussion ensued. **Mr. Shine** stated 150 foot buffers have been found to be good.

Mr. Barnes referred to the section on natural rivers. He questioned publishing a list of tributaries and if they need to follow natural guidelines. He suggested the possibility of adding an appendix. **Ms. Boucher** stated the DNR felt descriptions were not needed. **Mr. Barnes** responded a list, county by county, would be helpful and a simple way to get it out to staff.

Chair Boyd stated she would like comments submitted though the remainder of August; the comments submitted should be representative of the Committee member's groups.

WOODY BIOMASS GUIDELINES

Chair Boyd stated Ms. Boucher was going to give a very brief update on the Woody Biomass Guidelines (Guidelines).

Ms. Boucher reported the DNR put together a committee to help with looking at guidance; about 20 people were interested. They had a conference call on July 24, 2008 to go over general guidelines, and from there set up smaller groups to work on individual pieces of the Guidelines. From the individual group suggestions, they are putting together overall guidance on woody biomass in the state. The committee recognized and discussed the Within Stand Retention Guidance and the Soil and Water Quality Manual as being important to this guidance. There were some specific recommendations about removal, retention and frequency of entrance onto a site. After general guidance is completed, there will be some specific guidance such as what to do on brush lands, riparian zones, etc. **Ms. Boucher** stated she will send the list of committee members to the FMAC, as well as the meeting notes that Mr. David Neumann wrote. **Chair Boyd** commented that Ms. Boucher is currently the Acting State Forester. The goal is to get something out by October. Since there is a short timeline, the committee using smaller groups will be beneficial. It will most likely be Ms. Boucher and Mr. Neumann who writes the Guidelines based on the recommendations from the individual groups.

REGIONAL STATE FOREST PLAN (PLAN) TIMELINES

Chair Boyd gave an update of the Regional State Forest Planning process. She stated the timeline on the Plan has been changed because of the introduction and public review of the Management Area Concept. The plan was to have regional plans ready by the end of this calendar year, but it will be impossible to meet that timeline and still get quality information. The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Plan has been most delayed due to the loss of their Planner. He has been on military assignment for four years. The DNR will be hiring a limited-term Planner but this will take time. The other two regional plans are scheduled for February 2010 for the Western Upper Peninsula, and January 2010 for the Southern and Northern Lower Peninsula. These timeline were approved by the Statewide Council last week. **Chair Boyd** reiterated if constituents are interested in the regional plans, they need to be involved in the meetings. Published dates for the meetings will be on the DNR website; some press releases have already gone out.

WHAT NEXT AGENDA ITEMS SHOULD BE

Chair Boyd asked the Committee if they are interested in the October 8 meeting being a field trip, and if there will be enough topics to add another meeting to the schedule. **Mr. Berghorn** stated he has a field trip opportunity in the works. The scheduled date will most likely be October 16. This field trip will address two issues; aspen management in Roscommon and a repeat of field identification of black and red oak, and setting up sales. He stated FMAC members are invited to attend. A suggestion was made to move the October 8 meeting to October 16 and make it an all day meeting combined with a field tour. Decision was to leave the October 8 meeting as is, and Mr. Berghorn will send an invitation to the Committee for the October 16 field tour he is arranging.

Agenda items for October 8 meeting:

- Process Improvements
- Woody Biomass Guidance Documents
- Election of Officers
- Improving Public Involvement
- Field Trip Opportunities

Agenda and meeting materials will be sent to FMAC members two weeks prior to the meeting. The draft meeting summary will be sent within seven business days.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Boyd asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: **Mr. Roberson** moved to adjourn; seconded by **Mr. Barnes**
Motion to adjourn passed unanimously

The Forest Management Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.